ONE MORE NORTHERN CITY LOOKS AT ITS RACE PROBLEM

How Newark Is Trying to Ease Tensions Between Negroes and Whites

Take a Northern city where whites and Negroes live side by side, work together, go to school together—and you still find racial problems.

Newark, N. J., is such a city. There, an experiment is under way. Idea is to find the causes of racial tension, then to eliminate those causes with a city-wide program. Hope is to avoid a flare-up.

Progress is reported by city officials. But some Negroes disagree.

One Negro leader warns: Before long, Negroes will outnumber whites in Newark—and then "things will be different around here."

NEWARK, N. J.

Newark, with a large and growing Negro population, is trying something new in the hope of averting the racial strife that has flared up in other big Northern cities.

City officials and civic leaders are seeking to pin down the problems that cause racial tensions. The next step is a program of education and action to wipe out these trouble traps.

A research team has just combed this industrial and commercial center in northern New Jersey. It found that the white population is dwindling steadily as a result of an exodus to the suburbs. At the same time, the number of Negroes in Newark is increasing "rapidly and consistently." It also reported:

• Newark's public record in establishing and protecting the civil rights of all groups is "exceptionally fine even among Northern cities." Recreation facilities, including swimming pools, are open without question to Negroes.

• Barriers to the employment of Negroes in offices, factories and laboratories have fallen and, as a result, a substantial middle class of Negroes has emerged. Negroes live side by side with whites in every public-housing development built by the Newark Housing Authority and in private homes in many neighborhoods previously all-white.

The other side. All is not sweetness and light in Newark's racial picture, however, the survey revealed.

A concentrated "black belt" remains in the central part of the city. Most Negroes seeking to move into better neighborhoods find they have to pay higher prices than whites and have more difficulty in getting mortgage money to buy homes.

Some discrimination in employment still exists. Many business enterprises hesitate to place Negroes in positions where their contact with the public is direct. Some unions make it difficult, even impossible, for Negroes to become members.

There are charges that Newark policemen are often brutal in their treatment of Negroes, that "the police shoot down crapshooters and pocketbook snatchers." Schools in the area that is solidly Negro are old and run-down, some Negroes complain. They point out, too, that no school in the city has a Negro principal despite the fact that there are applicants who are considered to be qualified.

Although many Negro families have moved into white neighborhoods without displays of violence, the survey found: "The reported tendency even in public housing has been for whites to move when Negro occupancy exceeded some undetermined percentage."

A major problem, one prominent Negro told the researchers, is human contacts in mixed neighborhoods. The whites and Negroes "are like strange bulldogs

—USN&WR Photo

A BUSY INTERSECTION IN DOWNTOWN NEWARK
The proportion of Negroes to whites has been rising "rapidly and consistently"

walking stiff-legged around each other," he said.

Negro vs. Negro. Dissension among Negroes is increasing as more and more migrants arrive in Newark from the Southern States. In describing this situation, one civic leader said:

"If the Negro leaders will talk to you, they will tell you they are more resentful of the Southern Negroes than the whites are. The Southern Negroes are lousing up their deal."

Negroes and whites combine in their hostility toward the most recent newcomers, the Puerto Ricans, the research team discovered. One white woman, remarking upon the strong hostility between Negroes and Puerto Ricans, said: "We hear from Negroes—about Puerto Ricans—the same things that whites say about Negroes."

Another white woman said: "Puerto Ricans are different from Negroes. They are faster with the knife."

Despite some simmering tensions found in the study of the city's group relations, Newark has remained outwardly calm.

Problems in the schools. All Newark schools are racially mixed, education officials say. Thus far, there have been few outbreaks of hostility between white and Negro pupils.

"I wouldn't say that racial tensions don't exist," one Negro woman reported. "I was told by a white boy that whites who associate too freely with Negroes are not accepted by other whites."

Negro sources and some whites contend that the city's school administration tends to neglect schools in areas that are heavily Negro. "It is hard to put your finger on it," one critic told the survey team, "but, when an area becomes predominantly Negro, the community itself begins to deteriorate. The best teachers are not sent there any more, schools are allowed to fall apart, and the discipline is very poor."

School officials deny this, say that overcrowding and double sessions were common in "good areas" before these problems reached the Negro section. They concede that many teachers are reluctant to accept assignments in schools which are predominantly Negro—not because of the race issue but because the schools are in "undesirable neighborhoods."

One teacher who, until recently, taught in Newark's "black belt," said: "These youngsters are much less conforming than the typical middle-class white. There are more discipline problems. Their values arise out of the slum culture in which they live. . . . A teacher who works with these slum children has to be secure herself and shockproof."

Up the job ladder. Negroes continue to get more desirable and better-paying jobs in Newark, researchers found. A Negro told them, however, that, while Negroes of more than average ability have little difficulty finding jobs, Negroes of only average ability still run into discrimination when they are competing for jobs with whites who are equally qualified. The survey concluded: "Thus, discrimination on the basis of race alone has been replaced by discrimination on a combination of race and ability."

There are many openings for Negro professional and technical workers in manufacturing plants—sometimes more jobs than there are qualified applicants. The Painters Union is reported to have taken in its first Negro apprentice, but most Negroes on construction jobs are hired as laborers.

A large transit firm, the Public Service Company, now hires Negroes as bus drivers and in other skilled positions. There are white-collar jobs for Negroes in department stores, banks, government offices and several major insurance companies that have headquarters in Newark.

Comeback city? Newark, the report declares, "is a city trying valiantly to fight its way back from a slump which has lasted for an entire generation." Here is how it relates the large and growing Negro population to this problem:

- As long as Negroes have lower average incomes than whites, an increase in the proportion of Negroes will diminish the city's tax revenue while at the same time increasing the need for those city services necessary to sustain a low-income population.
- Although the market for goods produced or merchandised in Newark may not stop at the city limits, a decrease in the average income of the city's population will inevitably reduce the prosperity of its industry and commerce.

On tap: more studies. The survey of race relations in Newark was made by a team headed by Chester Rapkin of the University of Pennsylvania's Institute of Urban Studies. It is described by the Mayor's Commission on Group Relations, which ordered the study, as a "preliminary sampling" of local attitudes and problems. A more extensive survey, stemming from the findings already reported, is planned for sometime next year.

The Mayor's Commission on Group Relations is a 15-member body of unsalaried citizens. It was established five years ago. Its chairman is Benjamin A. Collier, a Negro social-service worker.

"BLACK BELT"—A heavy concentration of Negroes exists in the heart of the city

NEWARK TRIES TO DISPERSE ITS NEGROES

PUBLIC HOUSING—In large apartment houses constructed by the Newark Housing Authority, Negroes encounter no race barriers, live side by side with whites

EMPLOYMENT—Negroes find more positions open, but some firms hesitate to hire them for jobs such as that of salesgirl, above

SCHOOLS—All are integrated and racial friction is infrequent, but Negroes say they still encounter bias

HOMES—Half the residents of Clinton Hill area are Negroes

—USN&WR Photos

PLANNING—Negro and white members of Clinton Hill Neighborhood Council meet with Newark's Mayor Leo P. Carlin, in shirtsleeves, to discuss ways to promote race amity

The report on the preliminary survey conceded that it found "areas of failure and problems still awaiting solution" in the mixing of whites and Negroes.

"Signs are not lacking, however, that individual and group attitudes are beginning to change," the report said. "Though the issue is in doubt, perhaps the most encouraging single instance is the Clinton Hill experiment in integration."

Flight stopped? Of the Clinton Hill experiment, the survey says: "When Negroes began to move into this predominantly Jewish area, the initial reaction of the residents was flight. Their panic led to the formation of the Clinton Hill Neighborhood Council. The council enlisted Catholics as well as Jews, and Negroes as well as whites, and has endeavored to halt hasty selling and to promote group amity. The area as a whole is now perhaps 50 per cent Negro and 50 per cent white.

"The claim is made, perhaps overhopefully, that those whites who intended to move have done so and those still in the area plan to stay. If, in the end, the white population diminishes and the Negro population expands, the causes may be less racial prejudice and more the difficulty of maintaining very large houses as single-family homes and the lure of the suburbs to those whose incomes have risen. . . .

"Even where hostility to Negroes is very strong, as in the fashionable Forest Hill area, familiarity conceivably can breed friendship rather than contempt. Some 10 Negro families live in the area and, while their experiences have varied, on the whole the community has adjusted to them and, in one instance at least, several white buyers followed a Negro into the same block."

In housing: a solution? The dispersion of Negroes throughout the city, says Daniel S. Anthony, director of the Mayor's Commission on Group Relations, may explain the singular lack of racial outbreaks in Newark up to now.

"Go to any street intersection in the city," says Mr. Anthony, "and the odds are that you will see Negroes and whites walking by. There is no other city in the North where Negroes live in every section of the town as they do in Newark.

"There are only three areas in the city where Negroes have not taken up residence in numbers. Those are neighborhoods where the homes are priced from $30,000 to $50,000. Even so, there are a few Negro professional men who occupy homes there now."

Reception: mixed. Comments on the preliminary report ranged from "excellent," voiced by some city officials and civic leaders, to "a lot of boloney," expressed by Newark's only Negro councilman.

Mayor Leo P. Carlin sees in the survey's findings proof of steady progress in the city's efforts to prevent racial tensions from rising and to curb discrimination against Negroes.

City councilman Irvine I. Turner, a Negro who does not often see eye to eye with the mayor, disagrees.

"You're not going to find the answers to Newark's problems by having a lot of soup heads ask high-toned questions," is Mr. Turner's blunt way of dismissing the survey.

Mr. Turner calls the official estimate of Newark's Negro population too low. Newark is credited with a population of about 444,000, including 120,000 Negroes. Mr. Turner says the figure for Negroes really is closer to 200,000.

Before long, he adds, the Negroes will number 300,000, "and then we'll have the most votes and things will be different around here." [END]

CLUES THAT WILL COME FROM NOVEMBER 5 ELECTIONS

It's time for the off-year elections on November 5, but most of the nation's citizens have no part in the voting.

In New Jersey, the voting may provide a presidential candidate for 1960. Virginians decide how far to fight integration.

The voting gives a glimpse of party strength and voter attitudes in advance of the big elections of 1958 and 1960.

Across the nation, voters go to the polls on November 5. Mostly, the candidates and the issues are local in nature. But several elections hold significance for the future—

- New Jersey elects a Governor who, if things go as indicated, may be in the running for a Democratic presidential nomination in 1960.
- A gubernatorial election in Virginia holds a portent of things to come in the Deep South, politicians say. The vote pushes the State closer to a final showdown on mixing the races in public schools and could presage a closing of the State's public-school system.
- New York City chooses a mayor in an election that tests the power of the big-city Democratic machine and also tests the loyalty of Negro voters to Democrats at local levels in the wake of racial incidents in the Democratic South.

You get a preview of the November voting from politicians, editors and reporters on the scene in the various States.

In New Jersey. Politicians and polls put Robert B. Meyner, the State's Democratic Governor, clearly ahead in his race for re-election against Malcolm S. Forbes, his Republican opponent.

New Jersey is heavily Republican in registration. Mr. Meyner is its first Democratic Governor in 14 years. The State Legislature holds about two Republicans for each Democrat. President Eisenhower carried the State by a plurality of 756,000 votes in 1956. Republican leaders, from Vice President Richard M. Nixon down, have campaigned hard for Mr. Forbes.

Studies by political analysts indicate that Mr. Meyner, the Democrat, has strong support from Republicans. One newspaper, surveying the State, said Mr. Meyner would sweep such Republican strongholds as Bergen, Union, Essex and Passaic counties. Later studies, after a visit by Mr. Nixon near the end of the campaign, indicated Mr. Forbes was picking up new strength.

A victory by Mr. Meyner in a key State, where Republicans outnumber Democrats, automatically would place him among the contenders for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1960.

GOVERNOR MEYNER—DEMOCRAT

CONTENDER FORBES—REPUBLICAN

.—USN&WR, United Press Photos

Another win in New Jersey for Meyner might lead to presidential candidacy

In Virginia. Politicians in the Deep South are watching the Virginia Governorship race. This is the first big test of segregation sentiment since federal troops were used to enforce integration in a Little Rock high school. The main issue in the Virginia campaign is: How far shall the State go in resisting integration?

Attorney General J. Lindsay Almond, Jr., the Democratic candidate, is committed to a program of all-out resistance that could lead to closing the public schools. State Senator Ted Dalton, the Republican candidate, favors a pupil-placement plan that might permit some integration. In 1953, Mr. Dalton got 44 per cent of the vote in a race for Governor. Mr. Eisenhower carried the State in both 1952 and 1956, getting 55 per cent of the vote in 1956.

Mr. Almond is the candidate of the powerful State organization that is headed by U. S. Senator Harry F. Byrd. Mr. Byrd has actively campaigned for Mr. Almond. Political analysts predict a victory for Mr. Almond.

The margin of Mr. Almond's victory will tell the story, newspaper editors say. If Mr. Dalton is beaten by a larger margin than his margin of loss in 1953, it is said, the Almond program of "massive resistance" to integration will bear the endorsement of the people; thus the significance of the outcome for other Southern States.

In New York. The top race is between Robert F. Wagner, a Democrat, and Robert K. Christenberry, a Republican, for mayor of New York City. The city is historically Democratic. Politicians say no upset is in sight that might give the election to Mr. Christenberry.

A shift of population from mid-city boroughs to the suburbs has lifted the political stature of Queens. Politicians are watching to see how well the Democrats can do with the independent-minded voters of Queens, and how large a vote Democrats can roll up in Manhattan, the Bronx and Brooklyn.

The boroughs of Manhattan, the Bronx and Brooklyn have many Negro voters. Negro Democrats hold many offices in